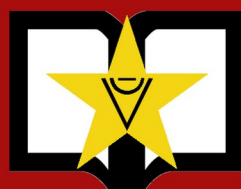


**Jan Młot  
(Szymon Dickstein)**

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# **WHO LIVES OFF WHAT?**



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## **Translator's preface**

We hereby present the brochure "Who lives off what?" from 1881 by Szymon Dickstein - one of the key pioneers of the Polish socialist movement.

Szymon Dickstein (in some sources 'Diksztajn') was born in February 1858 (exact date unknown, sources say February 8 or 14) into a Warsaw middle-class family. While studying at the University of Warsaw, he became involved with the socialist movement. On his initiative, the Faculty Delegates' Circle adopted a resolution to allocate the money collected on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of Copernicus' birth to the Polish edition of the works of Marx or Spencer. He intensified his activity in the socialist movement after making acquaintance with young Ludwik Waryński (1856-1889), who came to Warsaw from Saint Petersburg, where he joined the movement. In the spring of 1878, the tsarist police began looking for Dickstein, so he fled first to Krakow, and from there to Heidelberg. Then he was invited by Polish socialist emigres to Geneva, where from the fall of 1879 he was the editor and typesetter of the first Polish socialist magazine "Równość" ("Equality"), and soon he also became one of the main contributors of the magazines "Walka Klas" ("Class Struggle") and "Przedświt" ("Before Dawn"). Together with Waryński, S. Mendelson and K. Dłuski, he was the author of the first Polish Marxist program - "The Program of Polish Socialists" (also known as the "Brussels Program" due to the false place of printing given). He was the author of numerous pamphlets, including: "Who lives off what?" published under the pseudonym Jan Młot (John Hammer). It was extremely popular among workers and had numerous Polish editions and translations into at least several foreign languages, becoming one of the most popular publications of the international workers' movement. He also translated into Polish the works of Marx, Engels, Lassalle and Darwin.

He cooperated with the so-called First Proletariat (also called the Great Proletariat in historiography), the first Marxist party on Polish lands (and in the Russian Empire), founded in August 1882 in Warsaw. Its founder was

Ludwik Waryński, who returned from Geneva in December 1881, and activists of local socialist circles, Henryk Dulęba and Kazimierz Puchewicz. In April 1882, Waryński and Puchewicz issued the first unsigned proclamation supporting the strike of workers in the Repair Workshops of the Warsaw-Vienna Railway. In the summer of 1882, the organization prepared its first program as the "Appeal of the Workers' Committee of the Social Revolutionary Party 'Proletariat'". In January 1883, the first Party Congress was held in Vilnius, at which a temporary leadership was appointed. In March 1883, the second congress was held in Warsaw, where the name "International Social Revolutionary Party 'Proletariat'" was most likely adopted, which was used to sign party letters. However, the names "Social Revolutionary Party 'Proletariat'" or "Social Revolutionary Party" were also used in the appeals. Power in the party belonged to the Workers' Committee or, alternatively, the Central Committee, which were democratic, multi-person bodies.

Dickstein played an important role in the party's activities as the author of propaganda pamphlets defining the nature of party agitation, a foreign correspondent of the party magazine "Proletariat" and a liaison with the Russian Narodna Volya.

However, the success of the First Proletariat was short-lived. In September 1883, a group of activists was arrested, including Ludwik Waryński. This was the beginning of a wave of repression from the tsarist regime that destroyed the party. In August 1885, the trial of 29 "proletarians", selected from 190 arrested, began in Warsaw. In December, six of them were sentenced to death, eighteen to 16 years of hard labor, two to eight years of hard labor, and two to exile in Siberia. After appeals, the death penalty was upheld for four "proletarians", who were executed on January 28, 1886 in the Warsaw Citadel (to this day, the Warsaw left organizes anniversary celebrations). In July of the same year, members of the last Central Committee of the party were arrested. Thus ended the history of the Great Proletariat.

Szymon Dickstein did not witness the end of the party – on July 6, 1884, he committed suicide in Geneva for personal reasons. However, he created a lasting monument with his literary legacy. His most popular work was the short pamphlet “Who lives off what?” (“Kto z czego żyje?”), which he wrote in 1881 while participating in translation work on the first volume of Marx's “Capital”.

This work was extremely popular among workers and was repeatedly reprinted by subsequent generations of Polish socialist activists. And not only Polish – Dickstein's pamphlet has been translated into many foreign languages. A year after his death, the first Russian translation of “Who live off what” was published in Geneva thanks to the efforts of Dickstein's Narodnik contacts, who began to shift to Marxist positions and organized around G. Plekhanov into the Emancipation of Labor group. The Pole's work was also popular among Russian workers. Two decades later, Lenin\* pointed to the pamphlet by “ancient Dickstein” as a model of “good popular literature”. He heaped ironic scorn upon activists, who didn't appreciate the worth of time-tested propaganda literature:

“The ancient Di[c]kstein pamphlets are being republished, when every girl in Paris and in Chernigov knows that *ten* new pamphlets (trash) are worth a hundred times more than one old pamphlet, even a good one. It is only the Germans who do things in such a way that, for example, in 1903 Bebel's *Our Aims*, written **thirty-four** years ago, is being republished for the *eleventh* time!! That is so boring.”

Meanwhile, according to Lenin:

“the *o n l y* popular literature that is *good*, the *only* popular literature that is *suitable* is that which can serve *for decades*. For popular literature is a series of *textbooks for the people*, and textbooks teach the ABC, which remains unchanged for *f i f t y y e a r s* at a time.”

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\* In “[Some Reflections on the Letter from '7 Ts. 6 F.'](#)” (1903).

And in this respect Lenin put Dickstein in compant of Guesde, Lafargue, Bebel, Bracke and Liebknecht – the greatest Marxist writers of the 2nd International.

“Who lives off what?” has its limitations. “Proletariat” as a party drew ideologically not only from Marxism, but also from anarchism and narodnikism. Dickstein's pamphlet, while remaining the ABC of the Marxist theory of value, at the same time makes concessions to Lassalle's “iron law of wages” and remains quite vague about political means of achieving socialism, i.e. the proletarian state. It also reflects the economic backwardness of partitioned Poland, where the artisan sector was still of great importance.

Despite this, it remains a historically interesting book and even today it can be a model of a “textbook for the people”, teaching the “unchangeable ABC”.

### **Translator's note**

*"Who lives on what?" by Szymon Dickstein was first published in 1881 under the pseudonym "Jan Młot", by Kowalewski's Printing House in Warsaw.*

*Translation based on: "Pierwsze pokolenie marksistów polskich. Wybór pism i materiałów źródłowych z lat 1878-1886", vol. I, KiW, Warsaw 1962, pp. 481-532.*

*Numbered footnotes come from the author.*

*Footnotes marked with an asterisk and the text in square brackets comes from the translator.*

Jan Młot

(Szymon Dickstein)

# WHO LIVES OFF WHAT?

(1881)



Maybe you've read, and if you haven't, you've probably heard about the English book titled "Self-Help". This book had an incredible number of editions, it was translated into almost all European languages, it was admired, praised to high heaven.

In this book, the author describes examples from the lives of various people who rose to wealth, fame and importance from nothing. From "nothing", "with their own labor", with their own cleverness, they became millionaires, rich people, gentlemen. At least that's what the author of this book (his name is Smiles) says.

Do you know why this book was so eagerly printed and sold in England, why so many editions were put out, why it was so eagerly translated?

In England, as throughout the world, things are bad, very bad, very hard for workers. Hundreds, thousands of them are dying of poverty and hunger, just as it was the case in Warsaw, Lviv, Cracow, even though England, as they say, is the richest country in the world.

Therefore, it is no wonder that workers in England also complain, that they are agitated, that they want to get out of this muck of misery in which they are up to their ears, and that many of them say to themselves: "No, it should not continue like this. We have to change everything somehow."

- "Change everything? Like hell we'll let you!" - think the richer English, those who are neither hungry nor cold and who don't need anything different.

And they start to argue to the workers that things are not that bad, that it is true that sometimes a few workers will die, but they were probably hapless people, idle people; who knows, maybe drunks.

“Whoever is willing to work, they say, will achieve anything. Let everyone just think about themselves and work. Every man can live and become rich off his labor.”

Now you understand why this book about “self-help” was so praised, why it was translated into all languages, why there are so many other books that tell wonders about what workers could have if they worked constantly, worked tirelessly. Because everywhere there are workers, craftsmen who feel that they are not doing well, because everywhere there are gentlemen who are doing well, in England and France, in Germany and Poland. Because everywhere they want the worker to think least about the fact that everything needs to be changed – to believe that your poverty and misery are the most just things in the world.

In this booklet, I want to talk to you about whether it is really true what these gentlemen say, whether everyone really lives off their labor, whether everyone really “can achieve anything «through their own labor»”.

## I

“Every man lives off his labor.” Is it so?

At first glance, it seems to be somehow true. Firstly, because they talk so much about it, they write in newspapers, books, magazines, yes! we even heard sermons about it from the pulpits. And secondly, it seems to be an actual truth that a shoemaker lives off his shoe-making labor, a tailor off his tailoring labor, and a teacher off his teaching labor; after all, the factory owner also works, if not with his hands, then with his head, and even the ministers, the king, the emperor, how much work they have to do when signing various papers!

Well! so is it so? Does every man live off his labor?

You will probably be quite surprised when I tell you that this is not the case. No man lives off his own labor, not only kings and ministers, not only factory owners and merchants, but even all workers, craftsmen.

For example, if a shoemaker not only made shoes, but also had a piece of land on which he could sow vegetables and grain, if he himself spun, weaved and sewed his own clothes, if, in short, he created everything he needed in his own home, at his place, then we could say that he indeed lives off his own labor.

And in the past, several hundred years ago, this was indeed the case - in the past, when each city had a lot of its own land, and almost every craftsman was a citizen of the city and had the right to these lands, then the craftsmen really prepared everything they needed at home, on their own piece of land, and they really lived off their own labor.

But today, as we know, this is not the case. Craftsmen have no land of their own, and a shoemaker, for example, can only make shoes and nothing more than shoes. And you cannot eat shoes, clothe yourself with them, or sleep on them.

We can say the same about a tailor, a carpenter, a bricklayer. A tailor cannot eat or drink his coats, a brickmaker cannot cook his bricks for dinner. And what shall I say about kings, ministers and other such people? These not only can't do anything for themselves, but they can't eat for themselves; you have to put everything into their mouths.

So by shoe-making labor alone a shoemaker will not be fed or hydrated; a tailoring one won't put shoes on tailor's feet.

The one would be most in the right to say that he lives off his own labor is a peasant in our country. At least he makes bread, milk and vegetables at home; many even have this and all the clothing, although less and less these days.

You know that even now a rural housewife prefers to buy a skirt in the market rather than sew it at home, because it is prettier, neater and cheaper.

How about the fact that in other countries even peasants make almost nothing at home? There are those who only grow wine and nothing else, or only flax, or only vegetables - and they buy everything they need for food and clothing on the market.

So, as you can see, no one, or almost no one, lives off their own labor. A shoemaker lives off the work of a tailor, a bricklayer, a carpenter, a peasant; a tailor lives off the labor of a shoemaker, carpenter, peasant; the peasant again lives partly off the labor of a tailor, shoemaker, carpenter, etc. All people live not off their own labor, but off someone else's, off other people's labor.

"But every single one of them labors," you will answer, "if every single one of them didn't labor, they would have nothing."

That's true. Therefore, we will say, not that all people **live off their own labor**, but that they **make a living** off their own labor.

I know what you would accuse me of. "Not with a stick, but with a club. They don't live, but they make a living. It seems to be the same thing."

No, it isn't the same thing, and I'll explain why in a moment.

If a shoemaker, a tailor, a farmer really lived off his labor, if, as was the case in the past, if he had everything he needed at home, he could be certain that although sometimes he might be better, sometimes worse off, he won't die of hunger and will always be fine.

But now it's completely different. A shoemaker only makes shoes. He makes as many of them as possible and then wants to sell them, like any other

commodity. If he finds a buyer, good. He will sell his shoes and be able to buy what he needs. And what if he doesn't sell? If they will tell him that there's enough shoes, if buyers won't come to his store? What then? Will he cook the shoes for his children's dinner, or will he use the shoes to pay off his taxes, the usurer, the bank, etc.?

Well, you see, **making a living** off your own labor and **living** off your own labor are not the same thing.

As long as all people prepared everything they needed in their own home, as long as they sold few of their products, it could be said that they lived off their labor.

But since people started making more and more for sale, selling more and more shoes, locks, tables, clothes, i.e. various **commodities** in general, they also began to labor less at home for **themselves** and more for **others**. And it came to this that a Warsaw shoemaker makes shoes for a Russian craftsman, an English worker forges nails for a Warsaw shoemaker, and an American colonist makes grain for an English worker.

Since then, when there are more and more commodities in the world, no one labor for themselves, but everyone labors for others; no one lives off their own labor, but off someone else's, off other people's labor.

## II

"Then we agree. No one lives off their own labor, but everyone makes a living off it, that should be the honest truth!"

- Alright! alright! There is a lot more that could be said about this, but before we say everything, we must agree that there is a lot of truth in the saying that everyone **makes a living** off their labor.

Everyone makes a living **off labor**. Why **off labor**? Because whoever wants to sell any of his products, whether a shoe or a coat, a glass or a knife, will always judge his products according to his labor and will be paid according to it. We will explain this in more detail.

Suppose a shoemaker worked on shoes all day long and later received 10 yards of linen for these shoes. There's nothing extraordinary about it. He worked, so he has linen for it.

But let's imagine for a moment that there is a happy country in the world where... shoes fall down with the rain. There is no such country, well... but if there was? How much do you think a shoemaker would be paid for his shoes? Certainly - nothing. People would only say that it's not worth paying anything for shoes, that they don't cost **any labor**, that anyone can have them, and that our shoemaker would have to take up another job in order not to die of hunger.

And in our country, although shoes don't grow on trees, there are many things for which you won't get anything, which don't cost anything, because they don't require any labor, because there is no labor in them at all. You don't pay anything for water at the spring, nor for mushrooms in the forest, nor for sand in the river, because you can have them without labor, because they do not cost human labor.

But the more human labor there is in a thing, **the more value it has**, as they say, and the more they will give for it. They give more for a yard of linen than for a yard of calico. Why? Because a piece of calico is faster and easier to make, because it requires less labor than a piece of linen. A gold chain is more expensive than a metal one - why? Is it because gold shines nicer, because it is heavier? No, because a metal chain can shine as shiny and weigh as much as a gold chain, but because gold is harder to find, it takes a lot of labor, really

a lot, to extract it from the ground, and therefore there is more labor in a gold chain than in a metal one.

That's why every craftsman, shoemaker, tailor, baker, when they pay for shoes, a coat, bread, they pay for labor that seems to sit in these shoes, in this coat, in this bread. If it takes an hour of labor to make one loaf of bread and 10 hours to make a pair of shoes, then a pair of shoes will give you 10 loaves of bread, because the labor embodied in the shoes (or, as they say, the value of the shoes) is 10 times greater than labor contained (or value) in a loaf of bread<sup>1</sup>.

If a ducat is paid for a cubit of cloth, it is because to make it (that is, to raise the sheep, shear the wool, dye the cloth), it takes as much labor as to make one ducat (finding the gold, bringing it, melting it, etc.), e.g. 36 hours. We only pay one zloty for a yard of calico, because its production (sowing and harvesting the cotton, weaving, dyeing) requires 36 times less work, i.e. only one hour.

This is why it can be said and written that a shoemaker, a tailor, a carpenter, a locksmith, and workers in general make a living off their **labor**. They all make various products; they take these products as commodities for sale and are paid exactly as much as the labor they contained. Therefore, the more a craftsman works, the more labor he puts into the commodities, the more value he puts into them with his labor, the more he will get when selling them, the better they will pay for the commodities.

### III

“See” – you might be saying to me now – “you said so much bad about the book «Self-Help» and now you say the same thing as this book, that the more someone labors, the more they will earn.”

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1 If someone were to ask you what the **value** of a glass, a shoe or a dress is, you will easily find the answer that the value is the labor that sits, **that is contained** in this glass, in this shoe or in this dress.

Wait, don't rush to make accusations, and listen to me a little more.

I said above that the more labor a craftsman puts into a commodity, the more he gets for it. A shoemaker will get more for elegantly made double-soled shoes than for a botched job.

That's true. But for our shoemaker to make and finish his shoes, he needs leather, he needs tools, he needs to rent a workshop, and that costs money. If a locksmith wants to make locks, he also has to rent a workshop, buy tools and he has to live for some time until he sells his locks, and again, this requires money.

If someone has money, it's nothing for him. He will set up a workshop, produce commodities and then sell them according to their value, according to the labor that is contained in them.

But what if someone doesn't have money? If someone can't set up a workshop? If someone can't produce any commodities because they cannot buy neither materials nor tools? So what then? What will happen then if, as is most often the case, this person does not have and cannot expect help from anyone – and yet he must live, eat, drink, dress, live [somewhere]. The world is now arranged in such a way that in order to buy something on the market, whether food or clothing, you need either money or some commodity to sell. Our worker has no money, he cannot have commodities, so in order to live, to eat, **he must sell himself**, he must become a hireling, a slave – he must go to labor for others.

What do you mean by selling himself? What do you mean by being a slave? – you will definitely ask me. After all, working in a factory, working for a master craftsman is not slavery. Whether a journeyman or a factory worker, they are always free people, they labor for whomever they like and as long as they like, and no one has the right to give them orders.



We know, we know this freedom. We know how a master craftsman pushes around apprentices, we know how in a factory thousands of workers have to bow and bend before any scribbler. And do they ever dare to speak up, to respond to rudeness with rudeness? Will they speak up when the factory owner cuts their wages or cuts something off their weekly earnings? They will never dare, because they are slaves, they know that if the factory owner with a whip is not looming over them, then hunger, more terrible than the whip, is looming over them.

A man who sells his labor cannot be free. He must have a master and he has a master over him. Only people who do not need to sell themselves are free. That's tough! The worker labors in the factory because he has to, because he has no tools of his own, he listens to his factory owner because he has to, because the factory owner has two powerful allies: firstly, the army and the government, and secondly - hunger! Such enemies are difficult to fight, it's true; it's even more difficult to defeat; but it is also true that our workers have hardly tried to fight so far.

#### **IV**

A slave or not a slave, it doesn't matter, you might answer. Our point here is not about who is a slave or who is free, but about finding out whether it is true that everyone earns a living off their own labor, whether it is true that one can through one's own labor achieve something, [achieve] wealth.

- How hot-tempered are you! Hold on. We will slowly get to that. We have to carefully think everything over.

You are, my reader, a craftsman, a locksmith, a tailor or a shoemaker, or a laborer, you have no money, you cannot set up a workshop or get tools for yourself, and you go out on the street to sell yourself. After a longer or shorter

search, you will finally find a master craftsman or a factory owner who will buy you.

What do you think, reader, is he buying you for? Is it for your beautiful eyes? Not that? Maybe it's because he had mercy on you and wants to help you in your poverty? You know that too it's not true. He bought you because he knows that you are a worker, that you have knowledge and ability to run a workshop, that you have knowledge and ability to forge with a hammer, that you have knowledge and ability to tap soles, in short, **because you have labor power**.

When a master craftsman or a factory owner buys you, he only thinks about your power and skill. If you didn't have this labor power and skill, no one would even take you in for free. He needs your strength, and needs it very much. The only thing is – how much to pay for this labor power. Here's the rub. Because it's no art to know how much you need to pay for a glass, a shoe, a shirt. You simply calculate how many hours it took to labor around these things<sup>2</sup>. Let's assume that half an hour of labor was used to make a drinking glass (setting the smelter, melting the glass, blowing the glass, etc.), 20 hours to make shoes (tanning, cutting leather, sewing shoes, etc.), and one hour to make a plate. Let us further assume that in our country one zloty is usually paid for an hour of labor, or that an hour of labor is also contained in a silver one zloty coin. It is now easy to find out how much a drinking glass costs – half

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2 You could say to me here: "Have mercy, man, what are you talking about? who calculates the working hours that go into commodities? There are no officials anywhere who would deal with this, no one can set a tax for the commodity and everyone gets as much as they can for their commodities." That's true! There are no officials, no one does the calculation, but the calculation is done by itself. And here's how. For example, you are a shoemaker, you have made a pair of shoes that contains 40 hours of labor, or in other words, whose value is 40 hours, so if an hour of labor is one zloty, they are worth 40 zlotys. That's not enough for you. You demand 80 zlotys. And maybe at first they will really pay you 80 zlotys. But soon there will be other shoemakers who will sell cheaper than you, for 60 zlotys, 50 zlotys, and finally for 40 zlotys, and they will force you to lower the price and sell your shoes according to their value. It may also happen that so many shoes have already been sold that no one will give you 40 zlotys for your shoes, but only 35 or 30, then you will stop making shoes, you will wait for better times until they pay you for the shoes at their value again. So you see that although no one calculates the hours of labor, they always pay for a commodity about what it is worth, its **price** (that is, what they pay for the commodities) can never be much higher or much lower than **value** (i.e. on the number of hours of labor contained in the commodities).

an hour's labor, so half a zloty; shoe – 20 hours, so 20 zlotys; plate – an hour of labor, so one zloty.

But how to calculate it, how much a man costs, how much to pay for his power? Is it right to evaluate a person as a commodity?

Whether it is right or not, it doesn't matter; enough that they actually evaluate a person's power as a commodity. Let us assume that they buy a worker, that is, his labor power, for one day. Let us further assume that this worker, in order to live and work, to sustain his labor power, must spend 6 zlotys a day or (if a zloty has the same value as an hour of labor) 6 hours. If, after a day spent at work, our worker wants to continue working, he must spend 6 hours of labor (on food, clothing, housing, etc.) to regain his strength, to re-create his labor power. We can therefore say that the production of his power costs 6 hours of labor, or in other words, that his labor power costs 6 hours of labor, that the value of his labor power is 6 hours of labor<sup>3</sup>.

Mr. Factory Owner knows well that labor power worth 6 hours of labor is equal to 6 plates or 12 glasses, or the third part of a pair of shoes, and he pays his worker for his power, like for any other commodity, 6 zlotys.

**The worker therefore receives for his labor power exactly what he needs for sustaining himself.**

But let us return once again to our question: why does a factory owner buy workers' power?

Because we understand why the worker sells it. Hunger's stronger than everything, even the feeling of freedom innate in every human being, sometimes stronger than shame. We certainly do not envy the happiness of

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<sup>3</sup> Let us remember that the value of labor power is as many hours of labor as are needed to sustain the worker.

those unhappy girls who go out on the streets to sell their bodies. Isn't it hunger that makes them fall?

I don't want to compare the degrading craftsmanship of a fallen girl with the honest work of a craftsman who has to sell his labor, but you must admit that there is a certain similarity between them.

So why does a master craftsman buy the labor power of a worker? Is it to play with it? No! So what for?! Because he wants to earn money, he wants to enrich himself with "his own labor", as the author of "Self-Help" says.

In order to clearly explain why a factory owner buys workers' power, we will take a few examples that will best explain things.

Suppose someone sets up a factory that turns cotton into thread. Let's assume that he bought cotton for 14,000 zlotys, that he bought machines for 800 zlotys, that he used 240 zlotys for coal for the steam engine, gas and other accessories, and that he set his factory in motion. So we see that he spent 15,040 zlotys on setting up the factory. Why do you think he's setting the factory in motion? Of course, because he wants to sell his thread at a higher price than he paid for cotton, machines and gas; and of course, when he finally gets the cotton thread, he will not sell it for 15,040 zlotys, but will want to get more, e.g. 20,000 zlotys.

Wanting is not enough. The point here is to really be given 20,000. But whether they will give him, that is another question.

If such a miracle could happen that machines would spin cotton without the help of a worker, and if our factory owner took his thread to the merchant and then demanded 20,000, the merchant would simply answer him as follows: "Your thread contains firstly the value of cotton, i.e. 14,000 zlotys, or (if it takes an hour of labor to make a zloty) 14,000 hours of labor; then the value of the machines, i.e. 800 zlotys, or 800 hours of labor, then the value of coal, gas,

etc., i.e. 240 zlotys or 240 hours of labor. Total 15,040 hours of labor. So your thread is worth 15,040 zlotys, not a penny more, not a penny less, and I won't give more than 15,040 zlotys for the thread."

Whether our factory owner would be satisfied with such an answer – we don't know. We only know that to this day machines cannot work on their own and that, fortunately for the factory owner, the machine still requires human labor. The factory owner understands this, hires, let's say, 100 workers and pays each of them 6 zlotys for their labor power, as for commodities.

A worker hired for 6 zlotys a day knows that he was hired not to be looked at, so he cleans the cotton, spins, rolls skeins, etc., in short, he labors, he adds his labor to the cotton. After the first hour, he added one hour of labor to it or increased its value by an hour or by a zloty (if a zloty is worth an hour of labor), after 2 hours he increased its value, added 2 hours or 2 zlotys of value to it, after 3 hours – 3 zlotys value and finally, after 6 hours of labor, he added 6 zlotys in value, which is exactly what the factory owner paid for his power. So, after 6 hours of labor, the worker has completely paid off his wage. He works like this all week, and after a week the factory owner takes the thread, takes it to the market and demands 20,000 zlotys again.

How much do you want for it? 20,000 zlotys – says the merchant – it's too much! Do you think that there is really value in this thread worth 20,000 zlotys? No way! Do the math with us. As you can see, there is 14,000 zlotys of cotton, 800 zlotys of machinery, 240 zlotys of coal and, in addition, there is also human labor: 36 hours (if each worker works 6 days a week, 6 hours a day) multiplied by one hundred (because there were 100 workers), i.e. 3,600 hours. Total: 14,000 hours, 800 hours, 240 hours, 3,600 hours, i.e. 18,640 hours. So we can give you 18,640 zlotys, not a penny more.

– How so? I didn't earn anything, after all, I just spent 18,640 zlotys on thread and other expenses. Where's my income? So why was I producing? What did I gain from it? Why do I need all this farce?

Indeed, there would be no income, the production would not be profitable, if our factory owner had not come up with an idea. He orders his workers, who have paid off their wages after 6 hours, to stay in the factory and work longer.

- How so? - the workers might say - you are asking us to work longer, but we have already paid off our wages; we added as much value to cotton as our labor power costs.

- What are you telling me! I bought you, not your labor power, I bought you for a day and I can do with you whatever I like for that day. No talking, go to work.

And workers who, after 6 hours of labor, should leave the factory, rest, take a walk or work for themselves, stay longer and work another 6 hours. The factory owner adds on cotton for them, buys machinery and coal. After each hour of their labor, the workers add new value to this new cotton, and after 6 paid hours, each of them adds 6 new hours of value. It goes without saying that this new value no longer costs the factory owner anything and is completely free. One worker thus adds 6 zlotys in value; 100 workers add 600 zlotys in one day and 3,600 zlotys in a week.

Now if our factory owner wants to sell the other half of his thread, how much will he get for it? Of course, it's 18,640 zlotys again, i.e. 18,640 hours of labor, because the thread will include the value of new cotton (14,000), the value of new machines (800), the value of a new amount of coal and gas (240) and 3,600 hours of unpaid labor for the factory owner, added by the workers for **free**. Now the factory owner will gladly give up his thread for 18,640 zlotys, because it did not cost him that much, but only 15,040 (14,000 for cotton, 240 for coal, 800 for machinery). Now the production will pay off.

We will now do the final count. Our factory owner spent twice 14,000 zlotys on cotton, i.e. 28,000, twice 800 zlotys on machines and twice 240 zlotys on coal,

and paid 3,600 zlotys to 100 workers for 6 days. In total he spent 33,680 zlotys. He will receive 18,640 zlotys for the first half of the thread and 18,640 zlotys for the second half, for a total of 37,280 zlotys, because the buyer counts that the factory owner paid the workers for each batch of thread. Our factory owner's income is 3,600 zlotys.

And where did this income come from? Of course, it comes from the fact that he did not pay the workers anything for the labor on the second half of the cotton, that **the workers gave him the second half of their labor for free**, that to 3,600 hours of paid labor they added 3,600 hours of unpaid, and therefore that to this cotton they added 3,600 hours of unpaid, additional value or as they say, 3,600 hours of **surplus value** <sup>4</sup>.

Now we know why the factory owner hires workers. In order to generate income from their labor and collect surplus value from them.

So where does our cotton manufacturer get his income? Is it off his own labor? Of course not. So from someone else's? Yes, from other people's labor, from the labor of workers.

Workers work half of the day only for themselves, the other half of the day for the factory owner, half of their life they work for themselves, for their family, for their own people – and the other half of their life is spent so that the factory owner can earn an income from his cotton, so that he can collect the surplus value.

What we have said here about the cotton manufacturer can be said about all master craftsmen and factory owners in the world. They all buy workers, they all buy their **labor power**, but only to take advantage of their **labor**, to make them work longer than necessary, and thus enrich themselves.

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<sup>4</sup> So what is the **surplus value** then? Surplus value is the value that workers add to the product beyond what they received their wages for, and therefore – it is **the worker's unpaid labor**.

## V

You must agree that there is a lot of truth in what I have said so far. You could point out to me one thing, that this example with the cotton factory is somehow not entirely plausible. Where did you hear that machines cost only 800 zlotys or that cotton costs only 14,000 zlotys?

There is a lot of truth in what you say. The numbers used in this example were chosen to make this surplus value easier to explain. But now I will give you a real life example and the numbers will be so accurate that no one will be able to deny them.

In England, as everyone knows, they process a great amount of cotton<sup>5</sup>. There have been huge steam-powered factories there for a long time, workers have long stopped living off their own labor and had to sell it and become ordinary mercenaries, and they have been suffering from both hunger and poverty for a long time. However, factory owners are getting richer and have quite good incomes.

Well, one of such cotton manufacturers spent 895,000 zlotys on his factory and after a year he sold the thread and received 1,060,000 zlotys for them. So he has a profit of 165,000 zlotys, or 18 percent. You know that it is not much, because we also have factories, e.g. sugar refineries, that generate 40, 50 or even more percent of income.

Let's see where our factory owner gets this income from. To get a better look, let's calculate how much he spends on production each week.

The factory we are talking about has 10,000 spindles moved by a steam engine. One spindle (with the help of a worker, mind you) can spin 1 pound of thread per week. There are 10,000 spindles – so the factory can make 10,000

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<sup>5</sup> In 1873, 1,264 million pounds of cotton were processed in England using 33,500,000 spindles.



pounds of thread in a week. But to make 10,000 pounds of thread, you need to buy more than 10,000 pounds of cotton, because a lot of cotton is always lost in production. In our factory, they have to buy 10,600 pounds of cotton because 600 is lost. A pound of cotton cost 1 zl 9 gr in England (1871), so you had to spend 10,600 times 1 zl 9 gr on cotton, i.e. 13,780 zlotys.

To get thread from this cotton, machines, various auxiliary materials and labor are needed. The machines, i.e. spindles with a steam engine, cost 400,000 zlotys. But once the machines are purchased, they do not wear out immediately, but can be used for 10 years. Therefore, the annual expenditure on machines will not be 400,000 zlotys, but 10 times smaller, i.e. 40,000 zlotys, and the weekly expense (with 50 weeks in a year) is 50 times smaller than 40,000, i.e. 800 zlotys.

Next, the machines need black coal (to heat the boiler) and grease (to lubricate the axles). Also needed is gas to light the factory, etc. Well, coal in our factory costs 164 zlotys a week, gas - 40 zlotys. The factory owner pays 240 zlotys per week to rent the premises. Total weekly expenses (i.e. cotton, coal, gas, rent, grease, etc.) amount to 15,230 zlotys. However, all these materials will be of no use as long as there are no workers. So the factory owner hires 135 workers (each of them tends 74 spindles) and pays them for their labor power as much as is needed to produce the same power, or in other words, as much as the worker needs to survive (food, clothing, housing, etc.). Let's assume he needs 2.50 zloty per day or 15 zlotys per week. Therefore, all workers combined will be entitled to 2,025 zlotys per week.

If the workers worked only for themselves, that is, if they gave the factory owner and contributed to the cotton only as much value as they received from the factory owner in wages, it would be very easy to calculate how much the 10,000 pounds of thread they produced in a week should cost. Indeed, this thread should contain: 1) the value of used cotton (13,780 zlotys<sup>6</sup>), 2) the

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6 I remind you here that when it is said that the value of cotton is 13,780 zlotys, it is wrong. In fact, we should say this: There is as much value in this cotton, or, in other words, as much human labor as it takes to make 13,780 zlotys (not paper zlotys, but silver zlotys). When it is said that cotton is worth 13,780 zlotys, it is only a shorthand.

value of machines (800 zlotys), 3) the value of coal (164 zlotys), 4) the value of grease (164 zlotys), 5) the value of gas (40 zlotys), 6) the value of various extras (40 zlotys), 7) the value of rent (240 zlotys) and finally 8) the value of labor exerted by and paid for to the workers (2,025 zlotys). Total 17,250 zlotys, round-wise. Therefore, 10,000 pounds of thread should cost 17,250 zlotys, and 1 pound 10,000 times less, i.e. 1 zl 22 gr (more less).

Meanwhile, our factory owner receives not 1 zl 22 gr for a pound of thread, but 2 zl 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  gr, and for 10,000 pounds (10,000 times as much) more than 20,400 zlotys, which is 3,150 zlotys more than what we calculated. If our factory owner was given 3,150 zlotys more, it is obviously because it contains a new value that was not there before and was added by the workers from their own, unpaid labor.

So we see that 3,150 zlotys of income arose from unpaid labor, from surplus value provided by workers. These workers received 2,025 zlotys from the factory owner for a week's labor. During this week, however, they not only made up for their own wages, but also added 3,150 zlotys of unpaid labor. For 2,025 zlotys of paid labor, they gave 3,150 zlotys of unpaid labor to the factory owner. Each worker receives 2.15 zlotys per day and not only gives it back, increasing the value of the cotton, but also adds new value (surplus value) of 3.27 zlotys. Therefore, unpaid labor takes over one and a half times longer than paid labor; the worker works one and a half times longer for the factory owner's income than for himself.

The surplus value is more than one and a half times greater than the labor paid, or, as they say, **the rate of surplus value** is 1 and a half (or 150 percent)<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> **The rate of surplus value** is therefore the ratio between unpaid and paid labor. If a worker works 4 hours for himself and 8 hours for the capitalist, the unpaid labor is twice as much as the paid labor, and the rate of surplus value is 2 or 200 percent; if he works 6 hours for himself and 6 hours for the capitalist, the rate is 1 or 100 percent, etc.

I think I have now completely convinced you that not all income comes from your own labor. At least we have seen that a factory owner has income from other people's labor, but not from his own.

- Fine, the factory owner - but that's not all; there are also master craftsmen, landowners, officials, merchants, etc. etc. What can you tell us about them?

- Slowly we will get to them all. Let's start with the master craftsmen.

You know it well that today all footwear in Warsaw is made in private workshops, where a master craftsman supervises the work, journeymen work for pay, and apprentices work for free. Even little children probably know that a master craftsman earns money from apprenticeship labor, that he uses it. What we want to talk about here is the "paid" labor of a journeyman.

You know how hard the work of a shoemaker is. A journeyman hunched on a stool in a stuffy, dark room sometimes has to work for 15 or 16 hours just to keep up and earn a living. They pay him per item - approximately 6 zlotys per pair of boots. If there is enough work, a good apprentice can make 2 pairs of boots in 15 hours - and earn 12 zlotys from his labor. Now let's see where the master craftsman's earnings come from.

Leather, rubber, soles for one pair of boots cost from 14 to 17 zlotys, auxiliary materials (cords, awls, studs, etc.) - 20 gr; rent, let's say, 20 gr<sup>8</sup>, a journeyman's wage - 6 zlotys. If a journeyman received the entire amount due for his labor, a pair of boots should include the value of the material (leather, rubber, soles), i.e. 17 zlotys, the value of auxiliary materials - 20 gr, the value of rent - 20 gr and the value of the journeyman's labor - 6 zlotys. In total, the boots should cost 24 zlotys 10 gr. Meanwhile, the master craftsman sells a pair of boots for approximately 33 zlotys 10 gr, i.e. for 9 zlotys more.

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<sup>8</sup> Of course, an apartment rent costs much more, maybe 60 zlotys, maybe 100 zlotys, but in this apartment one makes not just one pair of shoes, but 50, 100 or more pairs a month.

Where did these 9 zlotys of new value come from? It's obvious that it wasn't in the soles, the studs, or the apartment, it's obvious that the apprentice added them and no one else but him could have added them.

So, for 6 zlotys of paid labor, our journeyman added 9 zlotys of unpaid labor for the master craftsman, 9 zlotys in surplus value, which, of course, only benefits the master craftsman. So again, unpaid labor is one and a half times greater than paid labor, so again, as they say, the rate of surplus value is 1 and a half. Out of his 15 hours of daily labor, a worker works 6 hours for himself and gives 9 hours to the master craftsman, enriching him with them.

Well, here you have the master craftsman – you see how the master craftsmen receive their income. Is it from their own labor? Obviously not. Just like factory owners, they can have income, they can become rich only off the labor of others, only off the labor of their workers and journeymen.

Now you see how one can't believe people who, like the author of the book “On Self-Help”, talk fairy-tales about what you can earn with your own labor; you now know that when someone tells how factory owners made their fortune through “their own labor”, it is only a shameful lie.

What would you say to the fact that there is a whole science that should deal with relations between people and the products of their hands – and which supposedly learned people have distorted so much that they try to prove with it, that the relations that exist now are the best in the world, that incomes do not include any use of other people's labor, that income and profit are the most fair thing, etc. This science is called **political economy**. And it must be admitted that it did a lot, a lot of harm to the workers, who had to believe it for a long time, until the socialists finally showed how much falsehood, untruth there was in this science, how much harm it was to the people and the workers.

## VI

But factory owners and master craftsmen are not everything. Where are the merchants, where are the landlords, where are the officials, etc.?

We're just getting to them now. And in order to explain exactly where their income comes from and what kind of work they do for a living, we will take an example.

Let's assume that a factory owner invested one million zlotys into his company. What kind of company it is, it doesn't matter to us. Anyway, let's say it's a sugar factory. Well, our factory owner bought machines, auxiliary materials, beets, hired workers and after a year he receives sugar worth 1,300,000 zlotys. So our factory owner has 300,000 zlotys in profit from his million. We already know that this 300,000 zlotys is unpaid workers' labor or unpaid surplus value.

The factory owner would gladly keep all this profit for himself. Even though they didn't cost him anything, it's always unpleasant to part with money.

But there are plenty of willing waiting for the surplus value extracted from the workers. Everyone would like to steal something, everyone would like to pocket at least a few drops of workers' blood and sweat.

**The merchant** is the first to extend his hand. A factory owner cannot do anything without a buyer. He knows well that as long as his commodities are in warehouses, there is no benefit from them. One first needs to sell the commodities, convert them into money, and only then can one say that the business is complete. So one needs to look for a **merchant** to sell the sugar.

The merchant comes forward, undertakes to either buy the goods or find another buyer, he is even ready to pay the money immediately, but demands

payment for his service; demands that he be cut off some percentage for the sugar, a discount. The factory owner cannot but agree to this, he gives him, let's assume, 10% and sells him his sugar not for 1,300,000 zlotys, but for 1,250,000 zlotys. So the factory owner's profit has decreased; part of this profit went to the merchant's pocket, but now there are round coins jangling in the factory owner's pocket. The merchant earned 50,000 on this operation. How did he earn this profit? Was it off his own labor? Of course not. His earnings were only part of the factory owner's profit, so they were part of the worker's unpaid labor, unpaid surplus value. And the merchant receives his income off the labor of others, off the labor of workers employed in the factory.

After the merchant comes the **landed gentleman**. Our factory owner built his factory on this gentleman's land. Because sometimes a factory owner builds a factory on his own land, but often also on other people's land. For [renting the plot for the factory] the owner of that land demands payment - he demands for the lease a so-called **rent**. Tough luck, says our factory owner to himself, when you have to pay, you pay. And he gives 20,000 zlotys in **rent** from his profit to the landowner.

So where do the incomes of landowners come from? Of course, also from the factory owner's profit, and therefore again from the unpaid labor<sup>9</sup> of factory workers.

Our factory owner only has 230,000 zlotys in profit left. But even now he can't put all [the money] in his pocket. We talked about the fact that he put one million zlotys into his factory. This million zlotys could be his own, but he could also borrow it. There are many rich people who do not want to engage in any enterprise, and prefer to lend their money at interest and pocket it every year. Well, it was from one of such capitalists that our factory owner could borrow money. After a year, when he managed - of course, thanks to

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<sup>9</sup> We are talking here about a landowner who does not run the farm himself. Such an owner, who runs the farm himself, also earns a living off the labor of workers, but his own, off the labor of farmhands, *komorniks*, hired workers, and reapers.

unpaid labor – to collect 1,300,000, he must pay some percentage for borrowing the million zlotys with which he entered the business. Let's say a capitalist lent him money at 6 percent. Therefore, the factory owner must now pay back 60,000 zlotys from his profit as interest. He is left with only 170,000 zlotys, and the capitalist takes 60,000 zlotys. From whose pocket? From the factory owner's pocket? Yes, but it only seems that way. Actually, this 60,000 comes from the workers, from their unpaid labor.

As we said, the factory owner had 170,000 left. But he can't really enjoy this money either. **The government** also wants some of this booty for itself. And the government is right. For what good would government be in the world if there were no rich to take care of and no poor to oppress? After all, the government keeps the army and police just to keep the poor in submission. When workers come together, make an agreement and demand that the factory owner raise the wage, the government will always send the army and the gendarmerie to put down the “disobedient” ones. When factory owners of two countries quarrel over which of them should send cotton to a third country, the government will certainly send its troops to war to defend its factory owners. And when workers in the country get up in arms, when they loudly begin to demand their rights and demand justice from factory owners and merchants, the government is even willing to invent war on purpose, just to remove the “restless” from the country. So we see that the government provides enormous services to the factory owners and the rich. Why do you think it organizes universities, beautifies cities and builds theaters? Do you think it's for the poor? No! The poor man can't send his children to school, he doesn't go to the theater. All this, the government, the police and the military, the theaters and the gardens, all this exists for the rich, for the gentlemen. For all this, the government, the state needs a lot of money, a lot of taxes. How much money does the army alone devour! And the police, and thousands of officials, big, small and tiny, and ministers, and emperors, and kings, queens, kinglets and devils know what!

The most taxes are payed by the poorest people, the workers themselves. But factory owners and capitalists also contribute a little. After all, it will be profitable to give to the government; after all, the government is their best servant. And our factory owner gives some of his profit: 30,000 zlotys - he pays as tax. It is easy for us to see that this tax was also paid by workers. After all, the factory owner has nothing of his own, and only hands out unpaid workers' labor.

Our factory owner has 140,000 zlotys left. Of these, he needs to pay an annual dividend of 5,000 zlotys to the factory director, 10,000 zlotys to the insurance company and another 5,000 zlotys to various other leeches. That leaves 120,000 in pure profit with which he can do whatever he likes. The whole world will say that these 120,000 are his "property", that he acquired them with his "own labor".

Therefore, our factory owner will be able to live on these 120,000 zlotys! And how! Because they do not calculate how much they need to maintain their strength. They live as they please. Theaters, balls, champagne wine, carriages, luxuries at home, luxuries at the table. One can live, after all, because one's pocket is full of the unpaid labor of workers. Unpaid labor will make anything possible. The factory owner's servants, his dependents and lackeys, the doctors who treat his health, and the scientists who prove that there is no better world than this world in which it is so easy to get rich off "one's own labor" will live off of unpaid labor, off of surplus value.

And the rest of the money that will remain after satisfying all his luxurious needs, our factory owner will add to his million, so that he can hire even more workers, take even more of other people's labor, other people's surplus value.

## **VII**

Now we will be able to give a complete answer to the question we asked in the title and at the beginning of our book.



Who lives off what? Off one's own labor or off someone else's? Who makes a living off what? Off your own hands or off others?

Well, we could divide all people into three orders here.

The **first** order is very small. These are people who live or make a living off their own labor. This group includes all craftsmen who have their own tools and work alone, and all peasants who have enough land that working on it can support them.

The **second** order of people will be the largest. These are workers who do not have their own tools, and peasants who either have too little land or no land at all and have to sell themselves, their labor power. This order includes all apprentices, journeymen, factory workers, laborers, farmhands, *komorniks*\*, etc.

And the **third** order are those who have tools of labor, but they do not labor with them themselves, but order others to labor with them. Those who live, support themselves and become rich off other people's labor, off surplus value stolen from other people. These are factory owners, master craftsmen, urban and rural landlords, merchants, police, army, kings, ministers and many officials.

And now I ask you: is such a world a just one, is the division into idle rich people and working paupers a just one? Just or not?

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We have already seen well in the first half of our booklet how our world is arranged. There is a relatively small handful of persons who live and have fun at the expense of the labor of the entire people. How can this happen? Why?

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\* *Komornik* – an agricultural laborer renting a room at someone else's farm..

Because this mass of people is not free, because it has to sell its labor power, sell itself.

And why does this huge mass of people has to sell themselves?

Because it has no tools of labor. We have seen that only those who do not have their own tools of labor must sell themselves, otherwise they would die of hunger.

So if we want to improve, better, change the current order, if we want to eliminate this poverty of some, these luxuries of others, what should we do?

It's obvious - arrange it so that everyone has their own tools of labor.

Then everyone will work for themselves. No one will work for others, no one will give away the surplus value of their labor. Then no one will buy people and their labor power either; no one will take the surplus value; no one will be able to enrich himself with the labor of others; no one will make a living off other people's labor.

Arrange so that everyone has their own tools of labor? But how to arrange it so that everyone has their own tools? Here's the rub, you'll tell me here.

How to arrange? But nothing is simpler than that. Take away the tools of labor from those who have too many of them and give them to the use of working people.

- Take away! Violently! But man, have mercy, how do you take it? Is that possible? Will it work? Is it moral?

Is that possible? Will it work? Is it moral? Well, we will try to answer these three questions here.

# I

And first, is it possible?

Is it possible for every worker, every person to have his own tools of labor or not?

This question is not as simple as it may seem. At first glance, it even seems that it is not difficult at all. After all, it used to be that almost every craftsman had his own workshop and was the master of his own home.

It was like that in the past, it's true. But then there were still few people in the world. The same city that had 500,000 inhabitants 200 years ago has 4 million today (e.g. London in England); a city that had 90,000 inhabitants a hundred years ago, today has 400,000 (e.g. Warsaw); in a country where 200, 300 years ago there could have been 2 million people, today there will be 10 million people or more; therefore, where previously 100,000 pairs of shoes was enough for everyone, today you need a million or maybe more, and in a country where once a million yards of linen were used, today you need ten or twenty times that amount.

So once, "in the good old days" – as they say, although they were not so good as to be regretted – in the old days, a weaver who worked with his wife and children at the home workshop, or a locksmith, who made the locks himself could neither make much cloth nor make many locks. They produced little because there was little need; the weaver made his cloth on bad looms, the locksmith made his locks with shoddy tools.

Today, a weaver must necessarily work on a machine. Wanting to weave a cloth on a loom is the same as wanting to ride horses to where the railway

leads. One would have to waste 100 times more time to do what one would do in an hour with a machine<sup>10</sup>.

Today, we need many, many products. Today, we need huge factories, we need steam engines, we need huge warehouses to produce all the necessary products. For example, today in England alone, 450,087 workers spin cotton on 33 million spindles!

If **each** worker wanted or could have his own workshop, if each worker was given a spindle, if each worker was made an independent worker, all of them would not be able to do their job and would not do even a twentieth of what they do now. There would be a shortage of cotton products everywhere in the world and our peasant women would complain bitterly about these new arrangements.

So you see that it is not easy and not always possible for everyone to have a separate workshop and separate labor tools. There would be no exploitation – that's true, but there would be a shortage of the most necessary commodities, poverty and even hunger everywhere.

Yes! Hunger! And you're about to find out why. Today, in England, for example, there are almost no workers who have their own labor tools. There are no peasants who would cultivate their own pieces of land. There are only large lords who have huge tracts of land, steam plows, steam reapers, threshing machines and who hire rural workers to till their fields. The rural workers have nothing: no field, no garden, no tools of their own, not even a cottage of their own; so they have to sell themselves into slavery to their masters and give them their extra labor (their **surplus labor**).

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<sup>10</sup> For example, today in England they process more cotton in one day than was processed in three years 150 years ago. Although it is true that there were much fewer workers then.

So it's bad for these workers, very bad; if you read descriptions of the misery of these rural workers in England in books, you shiver with horror and outrage at the cruelty and greed of English masters.

Alright! But do you think it would be good if each of them was given a separate piece of land? Would the **whole** English people win much from this? Not at all! In 1875, England needed 22 million quarters (a quarter is 300 quarts) of grain a year. But only 13 million sprout on English soil, so 9 million have to be imported from abroad. If the land were now divided into small pieces on which neither steam plows nor reapers nor mowers could be used, not only 13, but 5 or 6 million would not be produced. England would probably have to starve.

So you see, it wouldn't be entirely good if everyone had their own labor tools!

So what will it be like? Not having your own labor tools is bad, because you need to sell your labor power, sell yourself, enrich others; having your own labor tools – again bad, because there will be poverty, hunger. So what to do, where to find the solution?

The solution is there, and it's excellent. Why not keep it as it is? Where workers labor **together** in large factories and on large pieces of land, let them labor and continue to labor together, in common. But let not individual tools, individual spindles, not pieces, but **entire factories** belong to **the workers**, and **not to one**, but **to all**. **Let all factories and all land belong to all workers, let them be their common property.** Let the workers labor together, but not for the factory owner, but for themselves. Then everything will be taken care of, then no less labor would be done than now. Yes, much more would be produced. Everyone will know that he doesn't labor for one idler, but labors for all, that he labors for his comrades and that they labor for him in return. He will now know well that if he labors in the factory longer than necessary, the surplus value (surplus labor) will serve everyone, will not

be wasted on the luxuries of a few people, but will improve the lot of everyone.

So only **COMMON OWNERSHIP OF FACTORIES AND LAND** can save the workers.

## II

And now we ask: will it work? Can there be any hope that common ownership of factories and land will ever really come to fruition? Is it really possible for everyone to say that they are their own master?

After all, there have been poor and rich since time immemorial. After all, since time immemorial, there have always been, everywhere, a multitude of people who have been oppressed and a few who have oppressed others. After all, since time immemorial there were people who saw that this order was wrong, unjust; and yet it did no good: things were always bad for the poor, things were always good for the rich.

And don't we now see that there are more and more poor people in the world? Don't we see that misery has now increased terribly in all countries, and that luxury and frolic of idlers are increasing everywhere?

All this is true, most certainly true, but all this cannot take away our courage; precisely, from this we can see that the end of today's order is very near. We'll explain this in a moment.

Indeed, there are more and more poor people who have nothing of their own, and there **must** be more and more, tough luck. Nobody can do anything about it. When a craftsman sends his commodities to the market, he would like to get as much as possible for them. This is not surprising, after all, he put as much labor into them as he could. But what good is this labor? A factory

owner who makes the same products in his own factory does not need as much labor. If, for example, a lock costs a locksmith three hours of labor, in a factory the same job will only take two hours. The locksmith will want 3 zlotys for his lock (if an hour of work is worth as much as 1 zloty), but the factory owner will sell it for 2 zlotys. It is understood that no one will buy a lock from a locksmith, and a locksmith who does not sell his commodities will have to close his workshop and go to the factory to sell his labor.

The same thing that can be said about locksmiths can be also said about all craftsmen. With a machine, with a factory, they cannot compete and sooner or later they must become workers. More and more workers must lose their freedom and put their labor power up for sale.

If at least the workers always had a fixed wage and could count on it, this new situation would still be bearable. But no! It is the complete opposite. **The wage of the worker is constantly decreasing** and **must** continue to decrease, but **the profit** and income of the factory owner are **increasing**. Let's try to explain it.

Let's remember where the factory owner's profit comes from. It comes about because the worker gives him his surplus labor, because he works part of the day for himself, to sustain himself, and the rest of the day he gives away for free.

For example, if a factory owner has 20 workers and pays them 6 zlotys a day, he pays them 6 zlotys because that is what is needed to sustain them (food, clothing, rent). But the workers, after 6 hours of labor, make up for the 6 zlotys, and the rest of the day (the second half) they labor for free, thus giving the factory owner 6 zlotys of new value every day for free. And since there are 20 of them and they work, let's assume, 333 days a year, they bring profit to the factory owner of  $20 \times 6 \times 333$ , i.e. about 40,000 zlotys per year. It is obvious that the more of their labor the workers give away, the greater will be

the factory owner's profit; if, instead of 6 hours a day, they gave him 8, the profit would not be 40,000, but 53,280 zlotys.

And the workers do actually have to give more and more labor to factory owners.

Is it more and more?

Oh yes! Why does our worker receive a wage of 6 zlotys a day? Because so much is needed to sustain him, i.e. because it takes 6 hours of labor to obtain the value of food, clothing, housing to keep the worker alive and able to work, in other words, because the worker's ordinary keep is worth 6 hours of labor. The rest, i.e. 6 hours, is taken by the factory owner or the master craftsman.

If it were possible that it would take not 6 but 4 hours to pay a worker's keep, the worker would only get 4 zlotys; therefore, he would only labor for himself for 4 hours and would give back 8 hours of surplus value.

And this is indeed what is happening. As machines are now introduced everywhere, and as machines reduce the labor needed to produce commodities, less and less labor is needed to make all the items that a worker needs. In the past, a worker's shirt cost 2 or 3 days' labor, today it costs a day; in the past, a coat could cost 10 days of labor, today it costs 3 days. The worker no longer needs to labor as long as before for his own subsistence. In the past he had to labor 8 hours, now 6 hours is enough for him. But what good is this to the worker? In the past, out of twelve hours of daily labor, he took 6 for himself and gave 6 for free; today, four hours are enough for him, so there are 8 hours left for the factory owner. The two hours of labor, that the worker saves, will be of no use to him, because they go to increase his master's income. In the past, 6 hours of labor was needed for him, 6 hours - to create surplus value, and the rate of surplus value (i.e. the ratio of unpaid labor to paid labor) was equal to 1 (or one hundred percent); today, the labor



required for a worker takes 4 hours, and surplus value takes 8 hours, and the rate of surplus value is two (or 200 percent).

We further know that new machines are being introduced more and more into all crafts, into all activities that produce items needed by the worker. Therefore, the time needed by the worker for his subsistence must constantly decrease, and as a result, the time that the worker gives to the factory owner must constantly increase. The rate of surplus value must continuously increase.

So now we see why workers have to get poorer and poorer and factory owners have to get richer and richer.

- What a nice consolation for us - you'll tell me. - If it **has to be** like this forever, how can we have hope that things will ever change?

- I will answer this with a proverb: there is no evil that does not come to good. And there is a lot of good in this constant increase in the rate of surplus value. First of all, the good thing is that it costs less and less labor to sustain a worker. Now, when all the labor is handed over to the master, this is little consolation, but later this reduction in the necessary labor can be very useful.

And then we need to talk about one more thing that we haven't mentioned so far.

Do you think that all factory owners get rich from other people's labor? Not at all! Everyone can't get rich and one tries to ruin the other. One produces as much commodities as he can, e.g. calicoes for sale, the second sends more of them, the third even more, and each has to sell them cheaper than the other. Finally, they send so much commodities that there are no buyers for these calicoes and the factory owners go bankrupt. Only the rich can stay and run production, and the less rich ruin themselves and ruin thousands of workers who worked for them. And this repeats itself every few years. Every few years,

a lot of smaller factory owners must die and a few larger ones get rich; every few years, a huge number of workers are thrown out onto the street.

- And so what of it?

- A lot. - There are **ever fewer** factory owners and rich people, ever more poor workers; wealth falls into the hands of an ever smaller handful of people, while poverty grips ever greater masses.

The workers see that there are ever fewer factory owners, that although their wealth is increasing, their number is decreasing, and that whatever the factory owners gain in terms of wealth, they lose in strength.

Those workers who stay in the factory learn common labor, see with their own eyes how good it is when you labor together properly and harmoniously, how much time you save and how much better the products are. They also see with their own eyes how bad it is when all these labor tools belong to one owner who not only doesn't labor, but often doesn't even know anything about production, and sometimes doesn't even see the factory.

At the same time, workers in the factory learn solidarity. Everyone sees that they are brothers, that they all have one enemy who exploits them, and they understand that in order to fight this enemy, they must unite fraternally, help each other.

So naturally, the thought may arise in the mind of many a worker: Why do we really labor for one? There are so many of us - he is one - we labor for ourselves and he rips us off; we would run production properly, honestly, we would not care about profit, about extortion, but only about making a living. We would labor for the benefit of everyone - the factory owner works to his advantage and to the detriment of everyone. Why not unite all the workers, why not **take the factories and land** from all the masters?

### III

Take away? But will it be just, will it be fair? – you will ask.

I will answer you that the nose wasn't made for the snuff box, but the snuff box for the nose. People are not there to create ever more commodities, but commodities are there so that ever more people could use them. Workers produce commodities, they also have to use them, and for this they **need** labor tools from the factory owner.

And when someone tells you that property is sacred, that it is not right to take it, that it isn't allowed, you have one short but good answer: And were you allowed to rob us for hundreds of years, every day, every hour, and drain us of our blood and sweat? We take what is ours. We built the factories with our own hands, we cultivated the land ourselves; all this was created by our hands, so it should now belong to us. We no longer want to enrich others with our labor!

### IV

And now there remains one most important question.

How do we take back these factories and this land and how to achieve this?

– This is your business. This is for you alone to consider.

In the past, when it was a question of liberating the motherland from bondage, when it was a question of expelling the enemy from the country, then you, workers, were asked for help and then you could ask: “Liberate the motherland, expel the enemy. Fine, but how?”

Today – this is about **your own cause**, about your families, your brothers, and you have to be able to fulfill your own cause yourselves.

However, always remember that only with common ownership of labor tools can people be happy, live.

And if a hundred people and a hundred books like “Self-Help” tell you that one man can get everything through his own efforts, don't believe them.

**ONLY BY WORKING TOGETHER CAN WORKERS WIN HAPPINESS FOR THEMSELVES.**

### Appendix

Just don't think that you are alone in the world and that no one will help you in your case.

No, you are not alone! First of all, you have one ally who will always be on your side, who will always encourage you and who must lead you to victory. This ally is **the righteousness of your cause**. And even if there were only a handful of you, even if you had thousands of enemies, even if you had to endure persecutions and defeats at times, you can always boldly demand your rights, you can always boldly fight your enemies, the leeches of your blood and your sweat – because your cause is just, because your victory is certain.

And around the world there are millions of suffering just like you. There is no corner of this earth where the worker's labor is not exploited, and there is almost no corner where ideas about their rights are not spread among workers, where there is not talk about the worker's right to machines, the farmer's right to the land he cultivates.

It would be difficult to describe here everything that our worker brothers in various countries are doing to achieve true freedom, to not have to sell their labor. This would require entire volumes. But one can always say a few words.

Let's start with **France**. In that country, workers have long begun to think about their fate. Almost a hundred years have passed since the people of cities and villages made the famous Great French Revolution, liberated the peasants, expelled the king and established a republic among themselves. But freedom didn't last long. It was good only for those who had property. Those who had no property had to endure poverty, sell themselves and allow the emperor to take the place of the republic and all the rights of the people were once again taken away. Later there were revolutions in 1830, in February 1848, in June 1848, in September 1870, but all of them ended with power always falling into the hands of the enemies of the people. It was only on March 18, 1871 that the people managed to elect their own workers' government for the first time. For two months, Paris was ruled by the Commune, elected by the Parisian people, which consisted largely of workers and which could have fundamentally changed the entire order if it had not had to wage war against the treasonous government. In this war, the government got the upper hand: it murdered 40,000 people, most of them innocent, on the streets of Paris, sending thousands to prison and into exile. The government thought that in this way it would be able to completely exterminate the spirit of resistance that animates the French worker, and once and for all put out of his mind any thoughts of improving, changing his fate.

After the Commune, everything quieted down. Workers who, before the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune, had united in all major cities to fight against businessmen, factory owners, to build a real – as they said – “socialist” republic, now did not dare to defend themselves against oppression. But slowly the old resistance movement began to spread among the workers again. First, smaller secret circles began to gather to discuss improving the lot of workers. Later, various workers' associations began to emerge and grow, aimed at improving the lot of workers, books, pamphlets, newspapers were

published, people began to connect with each other and organize workers' congresses. In October 1879, at one of such congresses (the third in a row), deputies elected by various workers' associations met in Marseilles and there, after mutual deliberations, they came to the conclusion that the workers should make every effort to take possession of the land and factories, in a word, all labor tools. After the congress in Marseilles, this idea that there was no other way for the workers but to take over the factories and land spread more and more and now there is no larger city in France in which several, a dozen or several dozen workers' associations did not agree with that thought. The workers talked about the need to take away the factories and land at the general congress in Le Havre last year and at the partial congresses in Cette and St.-Etienne, in Paris; you can hear about it at every workers' meeting, read on every page of a workers' newspaper. This workers' army is slowly growing, uniting and organizing in France, which will lead to the complete emancipation of the entire people.

In **Germany**, three years ago, a huge **workers'** party existed and worked openly. This party had a lot of supporters in every German city, and when it came to electing members to the German parliament, in recent years five hundred thousand people voted for workers' candidates. The German party said that it also wanted factories and lands to become common property, but it considered this to be a further goal, and meanwhile it demanded universal voting rights for all citizens, free and compulsory education for all, freedom of print, speech, assembly and establishing associations as one likes, abolishing military service, etc.

But since then, since 1878, a lot has changed. As is known, in May 1878, one socialist shot at the German Emperor Wilhelm, and two weeks later another socialist shot at him. For this, workers began to be persecuted like never before, they were forbidden to gather, publish newspapers, join associations, they were expelled from their hometowns, sent to prisons, oppressed. At first, it seemed that this persecution would crush the party. But that didn't happen. Instead of working for their liberation openly – they now began to form secret

circles, instead of publishing newspapers allowed in the country – they publish them abroad; they print proclamations at home in Germany, and instead of – as before – openly fighting their enemy, now they are conducting a hidden, secret struggle. They do not lose energy, they do not lose confidence and they know that, sooner or later, they must in the end reach their ultimate goal, the taking of factories and land.

And it is so not only in Germany and France! In **Belgium**, in almost all cities, there is a workers' party that also strives to take over factories and land; only while some workers believe that they need to pay no attention to anything and take back the factories and land immediately, others think that they should first try to elect a workers' government, and only then should this government deal with the expropriation of businessmen, merchants, factory owners.

In **Switzerland**, similar workers' movement has existed for several decades; there are workers' associations in Zurich, Basel, Bern and Geneva who are not satisfied, not satisfied at all, merely that freedom reigns in their republic, but who say that nothing will come of this freedom until the whole community receives ownership of all the factories and all land.

In **Italy**, the workers' movement has also made enormous progress. It has not lasted for a long time – only a dozen or so years – but despite this, especially after the fall of the Commune in Paris, it is expanding, occupying more and more minds, helping Italian workers connect with each other in associations of same trade, in federations, etc. – it raises a lot of hope.

And in **Spain**, the movement among workers is young, only a dozen or so years old, and it has already taken various turns. It was, as they say, both on and under the cart. Once, workers even managed to take over the city of Cartagena in Spain and establish their own government there. But when the government occupied Cartagena, the workers began to be horribly persecuted. Now the Spanish workers are raising their heads again and

demanding – like all their European brothers – the abolition of all government, all exploitation, and common ownership of factories and land.

I don't think I need to tell you much about **Russia**. Who among you has not heard about the killing of the tsar, who among you does not know that he was killed by socialists, i.e. people who made it their life's goal to defend the workers and the people?

Ten years ago, there were many young people in Russia who understood, as we understand now, that as long as the Russian people do not have land and factories, as long as no one will free them from their poverty, they will always have to suffer from their masters' and from tsar's hands. So they decided to go among the people, teach them, show them where their misfortune comes from, prepare them to rise up against their masters and the government. And they really managed to find a lot of people among the workers who listened eagerly, who were ready to give their lives for the cause of the people. But the government began terrible persecutions, for one word, for one book, even women, even children, were sent away – to Siberia, to hard labor; innocent people were kept in prison for three or four years, tortured, murdered. The patience of the persecuted socialists finally ended. They paid for the murder of their friends with the murder of tsarist spies and servants. And when that didn't help, when the tsar continued to persecute and sent the best, noblest people to the gallows, they also killed the tsar himself.

What else can I tell you?

In **Hungary**, workers also know that they need to take away labor tools and have formed a separate workers' party.

In **Austria**, there is a lot of activity to strengthen the party, and although the government will not miss any opportunity to oppress, persecute the workers, they still have their own newspapers, establish open and secret associations



and – like all other workers – are marching on the way to their liberation. It's the same in other countries: in **Denmark, Portugal, the Netherlands** there are workers' parties that strive for the same goal.

But Poles too have not just started thinking about fundamentally changing the fate of workers. A few years ago, workers in Warsaw began to meet for the first time, form secret circles and discuss how to improve their fate, how to change it. They began to learn where to search for evil, where the source of their misfortunes lies. And they realized that they should work to take factories and land. They were persecuted, oppressed, kept in the Citadel\* for years, killed, sent to Siberia. However, it didn't help. The new idea has already taken root in Warsaw and no one can tear it out. And not only in Warsaw, but also in other Polish cities, workers are also talking among themselves about changing their fate.

In Lviv, first among the Ruthenians, and then also among the Poles, a belief was developed that workers needed to unite together as soon as possible (if they really wanted to think about themselves, to do something lasting and necessary) and aim at taking over the labor tools. Now the workers of Lviv are even thinking about creating a separate workers' party.

Just like that, you see you are not alone. In all countries, in all cities – from Paris to Warsaw, from St. Petersburg to Lisbon – there are people who think the way you think, there are workers' associations, entire workers' parties that strive for the same goal that you also need to achieve. How many are there? Who can count? Maybe a million, maybe half a million, maybe two million, maybe much more – it's impossible to know for sure. But what you can certainly count on is that if this million people communicated with each other, if they got to know each other better, connected and decided to work together, nothing would be able to resist them. This million would always be followed by tens of millions of people, and whatever they demanded, whatever they

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\* Warsaw Citadel – a Russian military fortress build in 1834, used as a prison and execution site for political prisoners.

wanted sincerely and strongly, would have to come true. Before such a mass of people, governments and armies, and lords, and factory owners, and merchants would have to fold. Nothing could resist such a mass.

Once upon a time, not only was this common action, this understanding between workers, thought about, but much, much was done about it. It was 17 years ago. The armies of the Russian tsar tormented the remnants of our insurgent troops, and the Uprising of '63 was coming to an end. Then, English and French workers, who had always supported the Polish cause, came to London in September 1864 to speak out about the uprising. At this meeting, one of the members said that although the Polish people are suffering from the Russian invasion, workers of other countries and nations who have enemies at home, who endure hunger and poverty, are suffering no less, although their countries have no foreign troops in them. Therefore, workers and all those who suffer need to unite together: French and German, English and Irish, Italian and Spanish, Polish and Russian, to free themselves **together** from all enemies, from the violence of lords and businessmen, merchants and factory owners, to establish together reign of justice on earth. Everyone liked this idea and it was decided that an association would be established to which every worker could belong, every person who wants to work for the liberation of workers, regardless of nationality and religion. The General Council was immediately elected to deal with the arrangement of the Association, to enter into relations with various workers' associations in various countries of Europe and America, and it was decided that after two years a congress of workers of all countries should meet at which the purpose of the new association and the path it would follow would be finally determined. This is how the famous International Workingmen's Association was founded.

After two years, the first Congress of the International Workingmen's Association indeed convened in Geneva, Switzerland. Deputies from various workers' associations of France, England, Switzerland and Germany came to

the Congress and set out to draw up rules for the Association. Here's what those rules said:

“The emancipation of the workers should be their own affair, and the work for their emancipation should not lead to the creation of new masters, but give all people the same rights and the same obligations. The worker's dependence on capital is the cause of his political, economic and material slavery. Therefore, the liberation of the worker from this dependence is the great goal to which all political movements should strive. All the struggles that have been carried out so far have not led to successful results because there was no unity between workers of various professions in one country and no fraternal communication between those working in different countries. The emancipation of workers is not a local or national issue, but concerns all peoples. The new workers' movement should not repeat past mistakes, but should unite all separate efforts into one.”

The regulations further stated that the new Association would be a central point for the unity and common work of workers of all countries who labor toward the same goal: toward mutual aid, toward progress and toward the complete emancipation of the working classes. Every year, deputies from various workers' associations were to gather at the congress. The congress was to deliberate on the common issues of the workers and annually elect a General Council to manage the general affairs of the entire Association. All workers' societies of one city that wanted to belong to the International Association usually united into one so-called section. If there were many associations in the city, there could be more sections, and then they elected a central committee to manage common affairs. All sections of one country formed a **federation** and elected a single **federal committee** that managed all national affairs and associated with the Association's General Council in London.

There is not enough space here to describe what great importance the International Workingmen's Association had. Every year, every month, every

day, the number of members of the Association increased; new workers' associations, new sections were founded every day, and old associations in all countries joined the International Association. The workers knew they had a powerful defender behind them. There was not the slightest workers' issue that the Association did not support. If in one country, e.g. in Switzerland, there was a strike of bricklayers, in other countries bronze workers, carpenters, shoemakers, etc. etc. collected contributions and supported the bricklayers until victory. If businessmen wanted to bring workers of other nationalities to a country in order to lower the wages of their workers, the International Association did not allow this. If there was a dispute between businessmen and workers, the Association took the workers' side and helped them win. Congresses met regularly every year: the second met in Lausanne, the third in Brussels, the fourth (in 1869) in Basel. At each congress there were more and more workers' deputies (delegates). At each congress, first an account was given of how workers' affairs and the Association's affairs stood in each country, then workers' issues were dealt with, such as the issue of daily working hours, the labor of women and children, the issue of associations, taxes, education and teaching, unemployment, strikes, the ratio of wages and capital, the issue of political freedoms, etc.

The entire world of masters and exploiters trembled because they saw in the new Association their mortal enemy who would put an end to their rule. By 1870, the International Association had reached great strength. There were sections of the Association in every major city in Western Europe; Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Belgians, Dutchmen, the Swiss, Americans, etc. joined the movement. It seemed that the International Association would change, completely remake the world and introduce a new order.

Meanwhile, war broke out between Prussia and France. After the war - the Commune, in which many of the bravest members of the Association died. Then the Association began to be persecuted everywhere, in almost all of Europe. Disputes, quarrels began in the Association itself; they were serious

enough that after the fifth congress in Hague in 1872, at which the Association split into two halves, the decline began. The Association's importance continued to diminish, and now only traces of it remain in Switzerland, Belgium, Spain and Italy.

But the thought that such an Association, such an international union of workers [is] necessary, this thought has not been lost among the workers of the whole world. They remember how powerful their Association was; they remember that this Association showed the workers what they should aim for - to take possession of the land and labor tools (at the congress in Basel in 1869).

Especially now, when all governments are so persecuting the workers and the workers' cause, when they are using such cruel and vile means, when they are helping each other in these vile acts - now the workers of all countries and nations must unite again, pursue one goal in strictly fraternal fashion - to take factories and land. This power so formidable to all peoples must be revived again - the international unity of all workers.

To unite with each other in the country and outside the country with workers of other nationalities - this is a powerful weapon that will lead you to your goal.

United together, if we're firm, we will not yield. We have to fight for what's ours.

